

# Adventure World

magazine

**SCOTT CASSELL'S**

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# ADVENTURE WORLD

*winter 2012*

*magazine*

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PRESENTS



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# **ADVENTURE**

with a purpose

by Brannndon Bargo

Rarely will you stretch your character, your way of thinking, or push your levels of comfort sitting on the couch watching political pundits banter about foreign policy and what the U.S. government should or shouldn't do. This past summer I had the opportunity to represent the American Alpine Club as a U.S. delegate in a cross-cultural climbing trip with what the U.S. considers one of the most dangerous countries in the world, Iran. The objective of the trip was to build a bridge of understanding between two cultures with a shared love of mountains. The American Alpine Club (AAC) would first host Iranian climbers here in the U.S. by taking them to the Tetons in Wyoming, and the Alpine Club of Iran (ACI) would take us to climb the highest mountain in the Middle East, Mt. Damavand, and establish new routes on the much more technical Alam Kuh, the second tallest mountain in Iran.

I have always been drawn to unique trips with a greater purpose than just sheer adventure. In previous expeditions I have tried to find ways to bring greater meaning to my adventures including raising money for charities, and most recently seeking solutions to malaria eradication by biking and canoeing in communities throughout East Africa, meeting with community leaders. So then when I heard that the American Alpine Club was seeking American climbers to represent our country in a place that is rarely visited by Americans, and as I would come to find out misrepresented, I jumped at the opportunity.

The AAC selected an amazing group of American climbers, including doctors, professors, writers, and some very well-known climbers that have put up first ascents all over the world. We represented a cross-section of the U.S. including Colorado, Arizona, Washington, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, California, and Texas. The AAC wanted a solid group of climbers, but more importantly they wanted people that would be able to adapt to a very different culture, had past experiences with cross-cultural building, and would be open to learning about new cultures with no presuppositions.

We would have our chance to learn about our new friends in the Middle East and start our cross-cultural

union by hosting our Iranian climbers in Grand Teton National Park. The Tetons are perhaps the most dramatic mountains in the U.S. reaching to heights of nearly 14,000 feet. Almost all of the climbs are technical with no easy way to the top. We enjoyed learning about our new friends from the other side of the world, and how proud they are of their Persian heritage. We first went on hikes in the park to get everyone acclimated to the altitude. We then went on climbs throughout the park including a climb of the Grand Teton with several Americans and Iranians making it to the Grand summit. We finished off their trip with a visit to Yellowstone National Park, and a home cooked meal in the home of one of the American climbers. We said goodbye to our new friends knowing we would be seeing them soon.

After a very thorough background check, all but one of our team received visas, and amidst a warm welcome from our Iranian hosts we arrived in Tehran to

familiar faces in a very unfamiliar land.

This was one of the most visually stunning and exhilarating climbing experiences I have ever had.

We quickly found out that our Iranian hosts were far more inviting, welcoming, and friendly

towards us in their country than we were when we hosted them in ours. All Iranians grow up learning that it is custom to make any and all visitors feel welcome, including Americans.

We headed out of Tehran towards the Central Alborz Mountains of Northern Iran. Iran is considered the most mountainous country in the Middle East and our destination, bright green with color, fast flowing rivers, and quaint mountain ski villages left us perplexed that this was indeed the Republic of Iran. The sharp ridge lines of these beautiful, craggy, pinnacled mountains were more like the French Alps than the deserts of the Middle East. We headed up the winding trails with light packs, as the mules our hosts hired for us did all the heavy lifting. We passed some of the most beautiful fields of pink and yellow flowers, rivers created by glacial snow melt, and the breathtaking waterfalls cascading everywhere we looked. As we neared our stone shelter we took a lunch break and watched local women gather plants to take back to their homes to make tea.





reached the summit via the German route in winter-like conditions as the rest of our team made an attempt at the summit using a steep 50 degree snow slope to gain access to the ridge line of the mountain. We did end up making the summit later realizing we climbed a sub-peak needing 300 more feet to reach the true summit. Though we may have not reached the actual summit this was one of the most visually stunning and exhilarating climbing experiences I have ever had.

Over the next week and a half we were success-

ful in making it to the top of the highest mountain in Iran, the Middle East, and the tallest volcano in Asia, Mt. Damavand standing at 18,406 feet. We also were able to see more of the country including the Caspian Sea in the North and the dry desert terrain in the south. We visited the cultural capital of Iran, Isfahan, a beautiful city with the second largest city square in the world and designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. While visiting these places we rarely saw any foreigners, and for this reason when we walked around town locals treated us like celebrities (more like Pauly Shore and less like Brad Pitt). While in the city complete strangers would go out of their way to help us find what we were looking for, old men playing ping pong in the park would invite us to play with them, and in the villages locals would ask us into their modest homes for tea.

Over the next several days we acclimated to the altitude going up the glacier to rock climb at 13,000 feet. We climbed in an area that had not seen many Western climbers and were told that only one European team had climbed there before. Our team climbed several difficult routes, including one potential first ascent, as well as a team of two climbing in a nearby area putting up a 400 foot climb they named Cafe Mohammad. Our Iranian host climbers said they would name the area the American Wall. It was at the American Wall that we were able to teach the Iranian climbers how to climb cracks more effectively. This type of climbing style is not common in Iran and they had difficulty mastering it. Though it was challenging communicating with our Persian hosts at times this was one of the nicer moments of the trip.

You couldn't help but feel the sincerity of these people. I kept thinking these are not the people that we hear about in the news. In fact the vast majority of people in Iran completely disagree with their government and the presidency of Ahmadinejad, but are afraid to say anything against him or his regime for fear of being beaten or imprisoned, never to be heard from again. Some of our new Iranian climbing friends

We stayed a total of seven days in the Alam Kuh region climbing and waiting for weather to clear so we could try to achieve our main climbing objective of establishing a new route on the north face of Alam Kuh, 15,912 feet. In the end the weather would not cooperate so we had to adjust our goals by making an attempt of the summit by any means necessary. A team of two, Mark Wilford, a well-known climber from Colorado, and Mohammed (last name withheld),

could attest to it first-hand having been imprisoned for minor infractions. They are a people trapped feeling pride and love for their country, but not having any power to overcome their government.

In nearly three weeks of travel we more than achieved all of our objectives. We climbed the two tallest mountains in the country, established several new routes, visited amazing cultural and historical areas rarely visited by Americans and in turn established great friendships with our Alpine Club of Iran hosts. Lastly we committed to having several more exchange programs in 2012 and 2013.

I know it is a simplistic view of the world, but when I think of countries I think in terms of mountains and

mountain ranges not political views, and boundaries. I had always wanted to visit Iran knowing that it was a mountainous, beautiful nation with a rich history. It is my love and passion for mountains that has taken me all over the world, but it is this passion that allowed me to visit a place that many consider dangerous, and off limits to Westerners. I feel that when we find our passions often they will take us to places that we may never have dreamed, and at times those places may be dangerous. Others may not understand our passions or what drives us to follow them but it is more important to shed our fear of the unknown and become people of action by finding shared common interests that bring us together.





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*The  
Open Road*

*by Adrian Foster*

There are some structures in the world that are instantly recognisable. Sydney Opera House is one of them. Standing majestically in this beautiful natural harbour, its glistening white sails point skywards as ships, sailboats and ferries pass by. It is flanked by the magnificent single span Harbour Bridge to one side and the gleaming, towering skyscrapers of downtown Sydney on the other.

Uluru, or Ayers Rock, is a huge sandstone monolith which rises proudly above the surrounding desert. Its deep red colour is in stark contrast to the bright blue sky which usually surrounds it. The barren landscape here is dry and unforgiving. It stretches on for what seems to be an eternity. It is of no surprise that this natural wonder has been for thousands of years one of the most sacred places to Australia's indigenous population.

Many people visit these two icons, one man made, the other natural, but what lies in-between? How does the country change from modern city surrounded by green hills, beaches and forests to red, baked desert, so dry and dusty that only a tiny fraction of the population want to live there. Travelling by bi-

to thrive in this harsh country. The city was wonderfully quiet at this hour on a Sunday morning and I sped along city streets then out through suburbs. I rode past shopping centres and car dealerships, commercial and industrial parks which then gave way to rural areas with houses surrounded by a few acres, hobby farms for city workers perhaps, craving a little bit of tranquillity. The Blue Mountains approached and although not actually mountains -- rather a sandstone plateau -- they rise to over 1000 metres above sea level. I had views back to the city and its skyscrapers and already the environment had changed dramatically. Winter temperatures regularly drop below freezing here and snow is not uncommon. Entering an area known as the Southern Tablelands the temperatures stayed toe numbingly cold. I was happy for the hilly terrain, it kept me warm riding uphill but my legs didn't always agree at eight in the morning, pulling the weight of my trailer loaded with food and camping gear. This journey was not just about cycling for me, but about getting back to nature -- sleeping outdoors and cooking on a campfire; the things I believe are natural to us. We lived like this for thousands of years before the very recent invention of all the conveniences and luxuries we now enjoy.

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Travelling by bicycle gives you a chance to see everything up close...  
This is the means by which I would go.

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cycle gives you a chance to see everything up close and at a speed that you can actually take in the environment you are travelling through. This is the means by which I would go, forsaking the shorter route via South Australia and the Stuart Highway to travel through Queensland and arrive in the Northern Territory from the East.

So on a cool winters' morning, with the sun rising behind the sails of the Opera House, I set off on my journey, pedalling away from the ocean towards an interior which Europeans had explored only 200 years earlier. The land claimed many lives, the newcomers lacking the thousands of years of knowledge and experience the indigenous people had, enabling them

As the hills flattened out the towns got smaller and properties became larger. I stopped and chatted to farmers who lived on 10,000 acre properties growing wheat and cotton. No hobby farmers out here. The area was coming out of an eight year drought so everyone was feeling relief and optimism. The only downside was that this had also brought a mouse plague and I had to deal with these critters every night. I was now leaving the luxury of sealed roads and riding on dirt but most of them were in great condition, often as smooth as bitumen and I was picking up some tailwinds. If the riding stayed this good I'd be there in no time, but I wasn't under any illusions; I knew the roads would get worse. Arriving in Broken Hill I'd covered around 1200km and I took a few days off to rest, ser-



vice my bike and stock up on food. I wouldn't see another supermarket for well over 2000km.

The Silver City Highway runs north from Broken Hill. It started out good, but I soon came to realise that 'Highway' can mean something very different out here to what it might in other places. Think of a wide, sealed, smooth road with flowing traffic and you will be very disappointed. Already there were sections of sand and corrugations that would slow traffic to a crawl and cyclists to a bone shaking limp. The properties were getting larger and I no longer saw houses, just homemade signs heading off to homesteads unseen, with names like 'Floods Creek' and 'One tree'. There were also the aboriginal names like 'Nundooka' and 'Poolamacca'.

Tibooburra is a town with two hotels, two service stations with shops and cafes attached as well as a

and the sand too soft to ride a bike up. My tyres and feet sunk deep and I was forced to dismount and drag my bike and trailer to the top, stopping halfway to regain some strength. Looking up as I reached the summit there were sand hills as far as I could see. This was going to be a tough day. There were seventy five hills and the road only improved when I reached some oil and gas fields where the roads had to be better to carry the huge tankers full of crude oil.

Innaminka is not so much a town as a service station and a hotel. The Cooper Creek flows past here (not all the time of course, but the recent rains had flooded it to seven metres deep). The water had receded to enable the road to be re-opened a week before my arrival. A 100km detour (at least a days' riding) would have been necessary if I would have arrived just those few days earlier. There was a lot more sand and bike pushing across this section too and it really amazed

me at some points that this could be considered a road at all. In other parts of the world something that looked like this would not be and certainly wouldn't be marked on a national map! I also had some mechanical problems which didn't help. These were some tough days and at the end of them I fell to the ground at sunset before recovering enough to collect wood to make a fire. I was rewarded for my efforts with an array of stars to sleep under that many people



Police and ranger station. It is a metropolis in these parts. After acquiring valuable local knowledge on which roads to take and informing the police of my intentions (for safety reasons) I continued on ever worsening roads. Passing through the 'dog fence' to keep Dingoes or native dogs out of New South Wales, I entered Queensland. Then the roads took a turn for the worst. The hill that stood before me was too steep

in their light polluted environments never get to see. The crackling of the fire was the only noise and I slept soundly (apart from the occasional mouse) after the day's exertion. I woke to stunning sunrises as soon as I opened my eyelids, often with emus and kangaroos around my camp. I took my time packing, enjoying the peace and tranquillity of the nature around me. There was so much space that I often felt like the



only human being on the planet. How far removed was this from busy city streets, noisy traffic and the rush of daily life in the city, with people racing to get home to their box-sized bit of space. Home often felt like everywhere out here. Sure, it takes some effort to get here, but to me the rewards to the mind and body are invaluable. In many ways I think this is where we belong.

I took a couple of days rest in Birdsville to let my legs recuperate and check all was well with my bike and trailer. Continuing north I passed artesian hot springs which are cooled upon reaching the surface for drinking water in this area. They are also great to soak in. I was often pushed along by a tailwind, passing lakes and rivers which are often dry, but by now were teeming with birdlife. I covered a fantastic 400km in less than three days and in the town of Boulia I was able to re-stock much needed food supplies. It was now time to turn west along the Donahue and Plenty 'Highway' into the Northern Territory. There was over 800km on this dirt road, dotted with just a few cattle stations. These stations are larger than many European nations and helicopters are used to get around! I was in good mental and physical condition by this time and covered the distance in eight days even though I developed a fever along the way which slowed me down for a while.

Again luck was on my side as the road behind me was closed due to rain in Queensland. Even a small amount of rain on these roads turns them into impassable sludge.

I took a few days in Alice Springs to sort out the mechanical problems I'd been having and got myself ready for the final leg of the journey- the 470km to Uluru. There were sealed roads again and although the 470km was a reasonable distance to cover in four

days I enjoyed the challenge. As Uluru came into view in the distance I was able to stop frequently where vehicles could not and the pace which I approached allowed me to take in the sheer size and scale of this geological phenomenon. It was an incredible way to arrive and I felt that all the effort I'd put in increased the beauty of the destination. As I approached Uluru, its huge mass filling my vision with its vibrant colour, I examined smooth contours where thousands of years of erosion had carved out holes and grooves. Bright green trees and plants sprung up around it from where water would gather after a rare rainfall. Its bright blue backdrop faded as the sun dipped lower in the sky, bringing out all the colours the rock seems to be hiding during the hot days. I then cast my mind back to the modern, shining city I had left forty-nine days before and over 4000km away. There seemed to be no similarities between these two places at all.



They could well be on different planets for how strikingly different they are. Yet there I was, having journeyed between the two with nothing but the power of my own muscles. I felt a great happiness but also a little sadness that my journey was over. I had seen and experienced so much in the last seven weeks. Seeing a country this way slows down and intensifies everything. It may not always be fun and it certainly isn't easy but the rewards of this kind of trip always keep me coming back for more.



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# Leadville

*by Duncan Callahan*

I love Leadville. Still. The 2011 Leadville 100 was unique in many ways and I will cherish many memories (good and bad) from my fifth consecutive Race Across the Sky. Here's how it went down:

The race consisted of over 600 runners eager to attempt the 100 mile distance which made for a tremendous buzz of energy on the start line as the final minutes counted down. I was able to chat with several of the guys prior to the shot gun start and it was clear we were all excited and amped to get this race underway. The start was tame with several guys running fast, but the larger group of us taking it pretty easy. Dylan Bowman, Ryan Burch, Tim Parr and I chatted a bit. Seems like we all took friendly shots at each other as we loped along. I also spoke briefly with a few of the other guys including Wyatt Hornsby and Ryan Sandes. Throughout these first five miles I was soaking up the vibe of being surrounded by peers that I do not see much of the year, but as we made our way onto the Turquoise Lake Trail I turned more introverted and used the time to assess where my mind and body were. Physically I felt comfortable for the most part and mentally I knew I was up for the challenge of another 100-mile race. The lingering doubt popped into my head though as I neared the Mayqueen aid-station by myself in roughly twelfth place. I was running alright, but the top guys were once again nowhere in sight.

I popped into Mayqueen at about one hour, forty-

eight minutes, which was two minutes faster than my predicted arrival. Mentally, this put me back on track, as I knew I was running my own race. Crewmembers Rich, Kathy, Hannah, Emma, and Lindsay met me here, swapped out my bottle and I never even broke stride. As I motored up the Colorado Trail section of course and onto Hagerman Pass Road, I felt a nagging fatigue that unnerved me a bit. I simply chalked it up to it still being early (6:00am) and kept chugging, hoping that the impending sunrise would brighten my mood and energy levels. Sure enough, toward the top of Sugarloaf Mountain my energy was high as I passed several guys with ease and noted that my core energy was close to what I needed it to be. Down Powerline we went and into Fish Hatchery. On the paved section prior to the Fish Hatchery aid-station I was running with Neal Gorman (that Neal Gorman... the guy who set the Grand Slam record last year). My breathing and stride felt labored as we moved along at a good clip into the aid, where my crew took great care of me as I walked through the aid section. Rich kept me focused by reminding me not to worry about where the other guys were and to simply run my own race.

Neal and I powered the next ten miles or so together and I was feeling pretty good throughout this section of gradually flat terrain. My stomach was feeling good, as was my general energy level, but I began to sense higher than normal levels of fatigue and tightness in my legs. Not a good sign with seventy miles to go. I ran smoothly onto the Colorado Trail section

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and conservatively down into Twin Lakes where I quietly confessed to my crew that my legs were having a hard time. My quads were extremely tired and sore, but with the rest of me feeling so good I simply did not worry too much about it. Through the river crossing I went and to the base of the Hope Pass climb. I had come through Twin Lakes about ten minutes ahead of schedule feeling good (except my quads) and entered one of my favorite sections of course... Hope Pass. I was only fifteen minutes behind the leader of the race and I was in seventh place. I had every reason to feel confident. I was right where I intended to be at mile forty. My energy was high as I started the climb, but my legs were not moving that fluidly and for much of the first half of the climb I had a conversation in my head about winning this race. I asked myself over and over again: "Can you win this thing?" My answer was "Yes I can." I felt confident that I was right where I needed to be. There was another reason for my confidence despite my legs not cooperating: I had been here before. Throughout my previous four finishes and two victories at Leadville, there had been many miles of feeling far from solid. There was always a turning point in the past and I made the deal with myself that I would ride out the low points until I could find that turning point again this year.

My climb up to Hope Pass was horrible. I drank and ate well as I climbed and came into the Hopeless Aid Station still in seventh place and with energy. I felt great at 12,000 feet as I had acclimated well this summer with many miles of training above 11,000 feet, but my legs were not cooperating and my quads felt so tight that I was having a hard time squatting down to stretch them out. Yikes! I had never had my legs this tight this early in a race and the real negative here was the influence this was having on my climbing. Usually when my legs are tight it is my descending that suffers but this time my quads were tight on the climbs. I kept moving, convinced that if I put more calories, liquids, and salt into my system, my legs would come back. Despite the stiff and painful legs, I had a decent descent down to the Winfield road and the final two and a half miles into the mile-fifty turn-around. I was amazed to find that I felt fantastic on this gradual terrain again and I cruised into Winfield (mile fifty) in 8:17, three minutes ahead of my pre-determined pace. The aid station personnel ushered me onto the scale and I was delighted to see that I had only lost less than half a pound. This was a good sign that my

hydration and salt plan was right on track. The whole crew got me out of there smoothly and I walked the first quarter mile of the road section with Scott Drum who was pacing me over this section of course for the fifth consecutive year.

The gradual Winfield Road section once again felt great on the downhill back to the base of Hope Pass, but when the climb began my legs again felt super tight. Scott kept me moving well, though, and I got into a rhythm that was slow but sustainable. My hydration, salt, and nutrition were spot on during the climb, but the transition into downhill running off the top of the pass was alarming as it took me a solid ten minutes to feel like I was moving with anything approaching fluidity. This stretch of course is daunting at Leadville due to its out-and-back layout. These five miles of downhill from fifty-five to sixty are where the majority of the other Leadville competitors are this long into the race. Despite the two-way traffic, though, I love this section as I soak up so much energy and positivity from the hundreds of other runners. I wish I could return even half of that energy and encouragement! Thanks to everyone for the cheers and encouragement on this section of trail. The kind words are incredible. Thank you! Scott set a great pace for me and I felt my legs click into high gear about a third of the way down toward Twin Lakes and my pace picked up. Scott and I ran well across the flat section, through the river crossing and into the Twin Lakes aid station at mile sixty where my crew met me with a ton of encouragement and assistance yet again. I gave Annie and Jordan (our three-week old) each a kiss, grabbed some grub and headed up the trail with pacer Jesse Crandall.

Crandall was awesome as always. Like Scott, Jesse was pacing me for the fifth consecutive year. I was able to remain steady on the climb up to the Colorado Trail, but I knew the pace was slow. At this point I was still in seventh place and about twenty minutes back from the top five. It was clear that the guys in front of me were likely not going to come back. Jesse and I made it to the Colorado Trail and my pace picked up for the next five or six miles. I made the decision that my legs were going to hurt badly regardless of how fast or slow I went, so I resolved to simply run fast. Jesse kept me well fueled and steady as we came to the Box Canyon aid station at mile seventy. I ate a little bit more food and felt nauseous and right at the

mile seventy sign I puked. This was the exact place where I briefly lost my stomach the previous year, so I did not worry all that much this time. Jesse got me moving again and we rallied into the Treeline crew access point where I stopped for the first time all race. My crew sat me down for three minutes while Annie massaged my legs a little and I was able to put a little bit of food down. I puked one more time before reaching the paved section and this seemed to jump start me as Jesse and I made our way to Fish Hatchery.

The forty minutes prior to the Fish Hatchery aid station saw the weather turn a little bit with clouds forming, a strong wind from the West and a slight sprinkle of rain. All welcomed by me as I came into the aid station with twenty-three and a half miles to go. Rich Smith picked me up here and I told him that I was making another “come-back.” Rich was pacing me for the third time and I was stoked to have him there as I was getting back “online” and mentally I was very positive for the ensuing climb up Powerline. I passed Ryan Burch about a third of the way up the climb and moved into sixth place. Ryan was moving okay after struggling with a low, but I remained worried because I knew he is a great downhill runner. Rumor was that Tim Parr was close ahead, too, and I set my sights on moving into the top five. Rich kept me going strong and had me feeling good as we crested the top of the Powerline climb and began the descent into the Mayqueen aid-station. Burch was not visible behind and I was certain we were going to see Parr any minute but my pace began to lag during the Colorado Trail section. My legs were not cooperating and I entertained the notion of taking some Advil or Tylenol for the first time in three years. Rich and I talked about it for a second but I decided not to as I knew it could have some negative effects on my stomach or kidneys. (Especially because I had not used it in so long.) Into Mayqueen we came where I had a great desire to get in and out as quickly as possible, but instead I sat down and coped with nausea again. I stayed about four minutes and Annie was right there trying to get me to relax, but instead I made myself puke a little, grabbed some soup and walked out of there with Grant Ruehle who was pacing me to the finish line yet again!

Just out of the aid station I puked four or five times as Grant looked on. I grabbed the cup of soup back from Grant, ate it and started to feel good once we

made it back onto the Turquoise Lake Trail. I was moving well and determined to catch Parr. This was my third go at making up some ground on the runners ahead of me. I thought I could sustain the pace to the finish, but I began to slow as my legs began to lock up on me and my stomach shut down with less than ten miles to go. Jeff Browning came by me just prior to the boat ramp. He was moving so fast. Burch came by me next as I “crawled” along the trail with Grant encouraging me. I put a few more calories into the system, sipped a little coke, but felt completely blown out. I was wasted and simply wanted to get to the finish line. Charles Corfield ran past me just prior to the dam. It was here that my crew was playing a couple of my favorite songs from Radiohead and Pearl Jam which helped me greatly. I also decided to pop some Advil here. Grant and I gingerly eased our way down the steep hill to the Five Miles to Go sign where I began to run again and was pleased that my quads were now completely numb. We motored along as best as we could talking about the meaning of life and just how exactly to run 100 miles effectively. Grant handed me off to Hannah Smith at the railroad tracks and Hannah dragged me (not literally) the last four miles to the finish line. It was great having her there over those last miles to keep me moving. Thanks, Smith! We came to the pavement and speed-hiked the last climb before shuffling to the finish line. I crossed the line in 19:11 in ninth place for my fifth consecutive Leadville 100 finish. I was pleased with the finish but underwhelmed with the poor result. Annie was right there as always to give me a big hug and kiss and tell me how proud she was of me. Thanks, babe.

My energy was super low in the warming tent afterward and I am thankful to my crew for getting me to change my clothes, eat some food and relax. THANK YOU, CREW, for getting me to the finish line yet again. I am so humbled and honored to have all of you in my life daily and yearly. Parr and I chatted briefly in the medical tent and it was clear that neither of us had the day we were hoping for. Parr is one of those guys that remains positive through everything, though, and I am grateful for his perspective and positive nature after this race. Thanks, man, and nice job! Thank you to the wonderful volunteers and aid-station folks out on course this year. Great work as always. You are all appreciated. Gigantic congratulations to everyone who finished the 2011 Leadville 100. Nice work. What’s next?





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## 2011 USARA Champions

The USARA would like to congratulate the following teams for their excellent achievements in adventure racing for the 2011 year.



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## Tecnu to be title sponsor of USARA Adventure Race National Championship

Tecnu has announced a partnership with the USARA as the title sponsor of the 2012 USARA Adventure Race National Championship. We are excited to have Tecnu as the title sponsor of the USARA Adventure Race National Championship. We have known them for along time and they produce a stable of terrific products for adventure racers such as poison ivy medicine and first aid gel. Tecnu has been a great supporter of adventure racing and will continue the tradition through 2012.

## 2012 Tecnu USARA National Championship Site Revealed

We are excited to announce that the 2012 USARA Adventure Race National Championship will be held in the Catskill Mountains of New York. This area will provide the two main ingredients -- a stunning scenic back drop along with challenging terrain -- that have become indicative of the USARA Adventure Race National Championship. The event will be produced by the New York Adventure Racing Association, NYARA, who have earned a reputation as one of the premier adventure racing production groups in the nation. The combination of the Catskill Mountains with NYARA as the race directors ensures a course deserving of the national championship moniker.

## Open Division added to USARA Adventure Race National Championship

The USARA will be adding an Open Division to the 2012 USARA Adventure Race National Championship. The top four open teams (all male and all female) from each regional qualifying race will qualify to compete in the USARA Adventure Race National Championship in the Open Division. There are so many single-gender teams competing throughout the year that we felt it was important to have these teams represented at the USARA Adventure Race National Championship. Currently the plan is for both the all male and all female teams to race in the Open Division. There is a plan to eventually split the Open Division and form a separate Female Division once the number of female teams is large enough to justify the split.

## USARA to Support Local Adventure Race Series

Local and regional adventure race series help build excitement around the sport of adventure racing. These series get teams excited about competing for a series championship and often encourage teams to improve through an increased training and racing schedule. The USARA will support these series by providing advertising, publishing series standings throughout the year and by providing bonus USARA national rankings points for the series finals.



**tecnu**

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The USARA would like to thank the following sponsors. Their support of the 2011 USARA Adventure Race National Championship was integral to the success of the event.

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# *A Brief Guide to Rainforest Footwear*

For the first time visitor and seasoned explorer alike, the tropical rainforest can be a source of endless fascination. The mysterious calls of an unseen bird, a brief glimpse of movement high in the canopy, or the kaleidoscopic colors of a caterpillar on a trailside leaf are all common and enchanting experiences. To best enjoy these moments, the visitor to the tropical forest should carefully consider what footwear to bring. The most important criteria for evaluating rainforest footwear are comfort, traction, waterproofness, and safety.

Shoes should obviously be comfortable, but it's important to consider that the ideal shoe for trekking

through a temperate wilderness may not work well in the rainy tropics. Muddy trails or frequent stream crossings can turn even a short hike into a miserable slog without the right shoes.

Safety is the most important quality. There are fewer dangerous animals in the rainforest than commonly thought, but there are some, and visitors must always take them seriously. Because the neotropical forest ranges broadly throughout the hemisphere, dangerous fauna vary from forest to forest, so it's always a good idea for the visitor to research the area before exploring.

Throughout much of the region, poisonous ground-dwelling vipers like the fer-de-lance and bushmaster are one of the biggest threats. The fer-de-lance, for example, is inactive by day and rarely encountered, but can be provoked to bite if accidentally stepped on while resting under a pile of leaves. Every visitor should make sure their shoes protect them as much as possible.

With these criteria, let's examine some common options.

### 1) Hiking Boots

Hiking boots have good traction in drier conditions, but on trails that sometimes become slick or muddy, their grip is diminished. They are comfortable, but because they are not waterproof this strength is weakened since it's often necessary to cross tiny streams while exploring the rainforest. Sometimes it's possible to skip over the water on rocks, but sometimes it's not, and just one slip can make hiking boots wet and heavy.

Because they are a closed-toe shoe, hiking boots provide some protection from poisonous snakes, and so are better than other choices in regards to safety, but skin above the ankles is still exposed. Hiking boots make an adequate option overall, but especially during wetter conditions have the potential of becoming cumbersome.

### 2) Sandals

Sandals make surprisingly good shoes for hiking through the rainforest because they're comfortable and light-weight, and many have remarkably good traction in wet or dry conditions. Conveniently, sandals can get soaked and quickly dry up again, so stream crossing is not troublesome.

However, sandals completely fail when it comes to safety. They're an open-toe shoe, and these should always be avoided in the rainforest. Even closed-toe sandals still leave a lot of exposed skin. Although the risk of encountering a dangerous snake is slight, sandals should not be worn in the rainforest for this reason.

### 3) Sneakers

Sneakers provide many of the same advantages as hiking boots, like being comfortable and closed-toe, but they sacrifice good traction and are not waterproof. Sneakers weigh less than hiking boots, so they won't be as heavy if soaked, but are still not ideal.

### 4) Rain Boots

Rain boots may seem more like a garden shoe, but they're well equipped to trample through even the muddiest trails, and are surprisingly light-weight and comfortable, even after long hikes. Rain boots also ace the waterproof test, turning the annoyance of crossing a stream into something quick and fun.

Most importantly, rain boots provide the best protection against snakes because of their calf-high rubber frame. Because of these advantages, and no obvious drawbacks, it might not come as a surprise that many locals, whether rural workers or naturalist guides, wear rain boots when exploring or working in the rainforest.

Rain boots make the best overall option, and carry the bonus of blending in with the locals. They can often be purchased at local shops and sometimes even grocery stores in more rural areas. Ask any local where you can purchase botas de lluvia and you'll be well prepared for visiting the rainforest.

### Additional Footwear Tips:

#### 1) Duct Tape

Especially during longer hikes, it's always a good idea to bring a tiny amount of duct tape. Placing a small square over a blister is incredibly effective at reducing the pain.

#### 2) Shake Before Wearing

Before putting shoes back on, especially after any overnight camping, be sure to turn them upside down and knock them together. It can be surprising what animals might hide in the cozy sole of a shoe.





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# 2011 USARA Buffet National Championships

## Cumberland Falls State Resort Park, Kentucky

### 10/7 -10/8

What I love about a 30-hour adventure race is the sheer uncertainty of the whole thing. You don't know how it's going to start (or even where it's going to start), how it's going to end or what's going to happen in between. I do know things are going to get ugly at some point. They always do.

Sitting here, in my jail cell at the Federal Adventure Racing Penitentiary, writing about this year's USARA National Championships, I have had a lot of time to reflect on what went wrong for the Dark Horse. It's a twisted tale of adventure, betrayal, gluttony and ultimately, redemption.

#### **The Start:**

**8:12 a.m.**

**Elapsed Time 0:00**

Blue Heron Mining Camp, Big South Fork of the Cumberland River, Kentucky.

The Team had been pretty excited when we heard the race started at 8:00 a.m. We never should have fallen for that. An adventure race starts when you get on the school bus. That was at 6:45 a.m.

We got our maps and coordinates at 6:00 a.m. and plotted the Check Points (CP's) and Transition Areas (TA's) we would need to locate. This was a fire drill. Forty five minutes is not enough time to do this carefully while also plotting a route from point to point. Some of the route finding would need to be done on the fly. That's part of the race though.



**Coal Tipple at Blue Heron mining camp**

The bus dropped us off in a parking lot at the Blue Heron coal tippie along the Big South Fork. Chaos ensued. There were a lot of well hydrated athletes on those buses. We were seated in the back of the bus so we popped the emergency exit and bolted. Alarms sounded, the bus driver screamed but bladders were relieved.

The race officials added to the chaos by announcing the race would start in 2 minutes and they had another map to give us. David was already studying the terrain and the coal tippie. Everyone knew we were going to cross the river on the tippie but there was no obvious way up to the trestle bridge 60' over our heads.

I knew David was up to something because while everyone else was facing the starting line, he was standing in the back facing the other way. Laura was off taking care of business. I went for the map.

I gave the map to David. It was nothing complicated. Get up on the trestle, run across it and find your way to the top of Dicks Gap Overlook, pick up the race passport and bicycles, ride like hell...

I was still trying to locate Laura when the one-minute countdown began. David was puzzling over how to get up on the trestle. Suddenly Jim Kelleher from Team Toccoa appeared in front of me.



Here, in a nut shell, is what he said:

“Jeff Papenfus died.”

I was blown away. For a minute I just stood there making stupid noises with my mouth opening and closing. What the ...

Jeff was a fellow racer and friend. We had last exchanged emails just a few months ago. I could not reframe my world picture on the fly like that. My universe still had Jeff in it and did so until the race ended and I had a chance to say good bye (which I did, bizarrely, by sending him an email). More on Jeff later.

I was still standing there dumbfounded when Troy Farrar (head of the USARA) sounded the start. The teams surged over the starting line and broke hard to the right like a flock of starlings in flight ( a “murmuration” to be exact: <http://vimeo.com/31158841?title=0>). They were making for the gravel road that led up to the trestle. Not David, of course, he turned around and ran the other way.

We actually never crossed the starting line. We bushwhacked straight up the embankment and hit the trestle first. The next 29 hours and 55 minutes might not go so well but we pulled a hole-shot at the start!

Our troubles started early. We ran about a mile and a half up a well marked trail to the top of Dicks Gap (no comments please). We popped out in a parking lot full of bikes. We quickly located our bikes and jumped into our bike gear. At that point we realized that the passport was about 400 yards away at Dicks Gap Overlook. We rode out, picked it up and rode back. Later this would be deemed:



**Both the theft of this picture and riding my bike at Dicks Gap is wrong. I know that now...**

### The First Offense

David's pretty good at reading a 3' x 4' topographical map scaled 1:24,000 while riding a mountain bike. The route is a tiny dotted line that is difficult to pick out under the best of circumstances. There are numerous rights and lefts off the dirt road or trail you want to be on, some of them are on the map, many of them not. David rides with one hand on the bars, one hand holding the map and occasionally no hands while he checks his compass.

A good portion of the 20 kilometer ride to the first orienteering course was on a flat section of gravel road in a river valley. We get in a team pace line and start cranking. David is riding on Laura's wheel when he loses focus for a second and almost rubs tires with her. I get the message when he locks his rear brake up. When you are only 12 inches from someone's rear wheel and traveling at a high rate of speed the sound of skidding tires gets your attention very quickly. He left a skid mark in the gravel. I left one in my shorts.

We blow through the first two checkpoints quickly. We make up some time on the lead teams by taking a less obvious route to CP 2. We crossed paths with a few of them just leaving the CP at a trail junction. From there we jumped back on the gravel road and arrive quickly at the first orienteering section just 5 kilometers down the road.

# the backpacker

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## Hemlock Grove

10:30 a.m.

2 hours 18 minutes

<http://www.usaranationals.com/resources/hemlockgrovetrek.pdf>

This is Transition Area 1 and we leave our bikes, switch to running shoes and grab the maps. Then we stuff our faces. There was a huge buffet set up for racers under a pavilion. That is not something you would normally see at an adventure race. It is not something you should see at an adventure race. There were sandwiches, cookies, soda, chips, fruit. A veritable feast.



**The theft of this picture is wrong. Not having our packs is not wrong. Is that a casserole in the picture?**

We dropped our packs, stuffing the required gear into our bike shirt pockets. This will later become a crucial turning point in Team Dark Horse's descent into the shadowy world of adventure race crime. This will later be deemed:

### The Second Offense

There are 5 marked orienteering points spread out in the forest on top of the hill in front of us. We need to collect 4 of those points in any order to complete this section of the race. We are in the Daniel Boone National Forest and while the hills rarely top 1500 feet there are a lot of them densely packed together. David describes it as "an upside down egg carton".

To complicate matters the hills do not have a continuous slope. They tend to be flat on top with very steep sides, frequently ringed by cliffs. Even the narrow valleys that usually serve as good approaches or exits from hilly terrain end in cliffs. Because the contours on the map are 40' and most of these cliffs are 20' to 40' high the cliffs don't always appear on the USGS maps we are working with.

We get our first taste of this particular problem when we chose to skirt the base of the hill to the east and attack the first checkpoint directly uphill ("H3" on the map above). We are stopped part way up by a wall of rock extending in both directions. We beat our way through dense vegetation along the base of the cliff to the next cleft that appears on the maps. That valley has a waterfall at the base. No way up. The team that has been traveling with us for the last 20 minutes gives some thought to free climbing the cliffs but admits failure would result in a "death event". We keep looking.

Eventually we find a way up a steep narrow valley that does not cliff out. David quickly knocks off the 4 points we need and we exit the plateau on a well-marked trail. I liked the way the race director marked these points. Instead of the standard orienteering point, which is a large three dimensional orange and white flag, Stephanie used two small strips of reflective tape. You weren't going to spot this from 100 yards away, you had to know where the checkpoint was. Laura was our punch card field manager. I have a long history of either losing the card or experiencing "punch malfunction". This also meant that Laura got to participate in a slightly longer race than David and I. Once we spotted a checkpoint we would stop, reorient to the next one and start running. Laura would still need to run over and punch it then catch up. That's another reason they don't give me the punch card. I never would have caught up.

Total time: about 2 hours. We also learned an important lesson (which we will repeatedly ignore). Bushwhacking in this terrain can end badly.

We returned to the TA, switch back to bike shoes, grab our bikes and... stuff our pie holes. Back on the bikes we are again on the gravel road in the valley. Our next destination is CP3, the mountain bike time trial.

I love a time trial. There is something very pure about riding a bike as hard as you possibly can over a defined course. Better if it's uphill. Even better: somebody pukes. The format for this TT does not really encourage puking.

The prize for winning this lung busting, soul crushing, 35-minute climb is... a bike seat. I have a bike seat. The Dark Horse is no think tank (as we will demonstrate) but we didn't just fall off the turnip truck either. We are not going to kill ourselves to get a bike seat. The race is 30 hours long. We are going to need a bigger carrot to get us to do something that painful.

My suggestion: Time credits. Five time credits for each division, each with diminishing value. That will get teams cranking up the mountain.

### **Bell Farm Horse Camp**

**1:00 p.m.**

**4 hours 48 minutes**

We check in at CP3 and get a start time for the TT. When they yell go we slam the throttle to the firewall, pop some wheelies and go up the hill guns blazing, gravel flying.... Well, as I said, that would be fun, but we just pedaled out at the same speed we pedaled in at.

Thirty-two minutes of climbing a crushed stone road and we top out at CP4. It was hot, 80 degrees at this point. We spent most of this time simply trying to keep up with Laura. Laura has just one speed. She rides 16 mph. On the flats David gives her a push assist to bring it up to 18 mph. On the steep climbs she simply rides away... at 16 mph. David and I get beaten like ugly step children.

CP4 was manned by a local volunteer, who checked us in. He was extraordinarily furry. He was shirtless, sort of. It's odd the things that really stand out in a race. Riding away someone on the team said: "did anyone notice...?" Yes, everyone noticed.

Our next objective was the canoe put-in, roughly 25 kilometers away. The race directions indicate the route "south and east of Piney Butte" on our maps is "no longer a viable option". Well, guess what, the one west and north of Piney Butte isn't "viable" either.



**Laura enjoying the bike whack**

The jeep track we chose down off Laurel Ridge started out fine. Then became overgrown. Then became a footpath. Then disappeared. The map indicated it was no more than a kilometer to the valley road, how bad could it be?

We bushwhacked for an hour down a steep, nasty gully overgrown with dense brush and brambles. We slid into a creek, climbed over downed trees, fought through thick bramble and laurel. Shredded some skin. David cramped. Laura bonked. The suck-o-meter was pegged in the red. If you are creating a mental image of this horror show make sure we are carrying bikes.

We lost a lot of valuable time and energy doing this. We had to call a general time out to eat and drink. This was squarely my fault. I made the call to stick with the plan when it started to go cattywampus. Oops.

We broke out at the bottom into the backyard of a meth lab and the situation went from "ugly" to "dangerous". I know an Appalachian meth lab when I see one because I saw the movie "Winters Bone".

The meth lab was closed for Columbus Day weekend but it seemed like a good idea to ride away quickly. Team Dark Horse will not display its mad time trial skills for a bike seat but self preservation is giddy-up time.

**Yamacraw Day Use Area**  
**South Fork of the Cumberland**  
**4:35 p.m.**  
**8 hours 23 minutes**

After a fast road ride we crossed the South Fork of the Cumberland River to TA2. We switch shoes again, hand over our bikes to be transported down river and cross back over the bridge where the canoes are lined up on the river bank. Oh... but first we stuff our faces. Sandwiches, drinks, chips...



**Not sure which team this is. I bet Jeff Woods knows because he's under that ledge. You could ask Joe Brautigam, he's sitting in the front.**

We had been told to avoid the channel on river right at the first bend after the launch. The powerful current swept under a rock ledge. The center channel looked rocky but was actually clear once you entered it. I got a look at some pictures after the race of teams that weren't paying attention at the race briefing. Their boats were sucked under the ledge and the teams were deposited in the river.

The next 2 hours were an uneventful but pleasant paddle down the beautiful South Fork. You are working pretty hard but it's a nice change of pace and gives the feet and legs a break. It's a little uncomfortable sitting in one position for so long but it is fairly tolerable. If you have a seat.

There are only two seats in a canoe and they generally go to the strongest paddlers. Laura had the good grace not to arm-wrestle me for the front seat. Frankly it would have been a toss-up and she didn't want to crush my self-esteem. We had packed in some pipe insulation, which we zip-tied to the center thwart. That was Laura's seat. I think she also recognized that if she made me sit there I would have been 12" from her ear and whining for 5 hours. Laura paddled hard and only complained a bit when David swung his paddle over her head and dumped cold water down her back. Repeatedly.

**Alum Ford Boat Ramp**  
**7:00 p.m.**  
**10 hours 48 minutes**  
<http://www.usaranationals.com/resources/alumfordtrek.pdf>

We pulled the canoe onto the boat ramp, grabbed what gear we needed and dropped our packs. Then we stuffed our faces. At this stop on the Buffet National Championships there was actually a guy with a grille wearing a chefs hat. You could order food and charge it to your room. I wish I was kidding. I had an excellent grilled chicken sandwich on sourdough with Dijon mustard and some cookies for dessert.

This was another 4-point orienteering section and the sun was setting. We waddled out of the TA as best we could, up the hill into the darkening woods. Adventure racers aren't good self regulators. If that was true we all would have stopped after we ran our first 5K ten years ago. We were struggling with the idea that we didn't have to eat the food they put out. It was there, so we ate. At heart we are goldfish.

In the fading evening light we quickly got the first two orienteering points on the circular route we had plotted. The second two we located in the dark. Finding checkpoints in the dark raises the difficulty exponentially. A good deal of the strategy for navigating is matching your maps to the terrain. Very little is actually done with a compass.



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Once you are limited to the terrain you can see in your headlamp your data points diminish rapidly. David is pretty good at this. At one point earlier in the race we had hiked down a trail for 30 minutes, bushwhacked up a ravine for 20 minutes, crossed a densely wooded plateau and stopped, David announcing we should be on it. Actually he had walked right by it, Laura was busy punching it. He makes a three dimensional image in his head of the map using the topography. He matches that image to our surroundings. At night the terrain turns into Braille.

We were making our way back to the boat after locating all the points when I was attacked by monsters. It was a pitch-dark section of gravel road with me trailing Laura and David by 20 feet or so (I cannot keep up with either of them on foot) when I reached into my bike shirt pocket for a bottle of water. I heard a loud, sharp noise right behind me, I spun around but there was nothing there. I continued down the road and again reached for the bottle: same loud noise! I'm a little freaked out. I pull the bottle out and take a drink, same noise! Coming from the bottle...

I feel like an idiot. The almost empty plastic water bottle was crackling every time I grabbed it behind my back. Hallucinations are part of the fun but I prefer they happen to someone else and I get to laugh at them. It's only been twelve hours. This sort of delusional behavior usually waits to the wee hours of the morning.

The chef was gone when we got back to the boat ramp but there was still a table full of sandwiches. The team discussed the next leg of the race while standing in line at the buffet jamming more food in our maws:

Me: "whaff bah nef fection luf wike?"

David: "Fwee ours wif toof chefponts"

Laura: "Lesh voll!"

The Dark Horse waddled down the ramp and launched our canoe, now dangerously overloaded with our sadly bloated bodies. It was very dark, our cholesterol levels were soaring, our blood pressure skyrocketing, hypertension stressing our hardening arteries. We paddled away into the night, the water lapping at the gunwales.

One of the first rules of river running is that you tie all your gear into the boat. That is always the first thing I do. Well, almost always...

Shortly after launching we began to hear the unmistakable sounds of rapids, a fairly large rapid. I don't know why we just kept paddling. We should have pulled over and scouted it or better yet, lined the boat through it from the shore. The range of fairly safe options is extensive. We didn't choose any of them. We just paddled right into a Class III rapid in the pitch dark. It was short but thrilling ride. My theory: food coma.

It only became apparent it was a serious rapid when we had committed to it. The canoe accelerated rapidly and we were suddenly in full white water mode. I was doing my best to give David some course direction but I could only see about 20 yards in my headlamp. We were covering 20 yards every 3 seconds. We hung in there despite some near misses but ran out of luck when it became apparent we could not avoid a head on collision with a large boulder. I did not call for a course correction.

It's been said that if the Titanic had hit that iceberg head-on there would have been a lot of spilled drinks and angry rich people. The attempt to avoid it created all the popsicle people. I preferred a direct hit to getting wrapped around the rock. I sounded general quarters and warned the team of imminent impact.



**Here, there be monsters...**



When we hit, the bow bounced hard and to port. I leaned hard on the starboard side to prevent the gunwale on the port side from going under and for few seconds it looked promising. Then fluid dynamics intervened. The stern was forced around by the weight of the moving water, the boat pivoting on the rock we hit. We paddled hard forward to get clear but by then we were in the nearly always fatal “sideways” position. The end came quickly.

As we were swept down river we rolled up onto the next rock, the upstream gunwale went under, the boat instantly capsized, throwing Laura and I into the river. I assumed David was swimming as well but couldn’t see him anywhere. Here’s what went through my head:

Boat or gear.

It was only at this moment that I realized we had not tied our gear in. We had thrown all our packs into a single garbage bag to keep them dry but never tied the bag into the boat. Now I had a choice:

- Grab the gear and hope we find the boat.
- Grab the boat and hope we find the gear.

I will admit I did not give a second thought to David. He always turns up in one piece. They say God watches out for children, fools and drunks. David doesn’t drink much but...

I did give some thought to Laura. This was her first Nationals and I would have felt bad if she expired. We would have been disqualified too (although David would have argued the rules do not say all team mates have to be alive at the finish).

I am puzzling this out while swimming in rapids at night next to a sinking canoe. I go for the gear bag. It’s a black plastic bag and without it the race is over. The canoe is bright yellow and 17’ long, I figure it’s a good bet that I will eventually find the canoe even at night.

As I reach over Laura, who is also enjoying a dip in the river, she calmly informs me that she has the bag and I should see to the canoe. I do just that, grabbing the bow handle. The boat immediately swung lengthwise to the current. Laura disappeared into night, bobbing downstream through the rapids, clutching our gear. Just before I lost sight of her, I thought; “what a brave and quick thinking teammate Laura is, I hope I see her again someday.”

I swam the canoe to shore, suffering a few whacks on the butt and shins as I went over some rocks. Nothing more serious than one would expect at a vigorous fraternity hazing. I had been taught at whitewater kayak school that to let go of ones paddle was a sin so unpardonable that you could be dismissed from the school for committing it so I actually still had my paddle.

When I got into the shallows the real trouble started. The canoe was full of water and the stern was out in the current, I couldn’t drag it out and the river was sucking it downstream. I had my feet planted but my arms were coming out of their sockets. It was about this time I began to wonder where David might be.

“Grab my paddle!”

That’s where David was. Upstream on the bank. He had managed to exit the river without the gear, the boat or his paddle. It went right between my legs. I let go of the canoe with one hand and grabbed his paddle (mine was now in the canoe). I thought the remaining arm was going to rip off at the shoulder. David was still standing 10 yards upstream admiring what a good swimmer he was. I requested assistance. I did not use the word “assistance”.

We dragged the boat out and a minute or two later Laura came up the bank, out of the dark, still clutching the gear bag. Good old Laura, it was great to get the gear back and nice to see she had survived. No awkward next of kin notifications.

That’s when we noticed the fish. We were getting ready to empty the canoe, headlamps on, when we realized that





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lazy runs from the stern to the bow.

It somehow seemed like an accomplishment, catching this fish, we didn't want to just let it go. We discussed whether we thought we could get any extra credit for it. That seemed unlikely so we flipped the boat over and set the trout free. We portaged along the bank to the pool below the rapids. We loaded up and launched from there.

Along with the gear, canoe, paddle and both team mates David had also lost the maps. That was going to be a problem. We paddled the calm pool below the rapids, searching with our headlamps. We located them floating on the edge of the pool. That was a lucky break.

The temperature was dropping into the low 50's and we were soaking wet. There was some tense paddling as we encountered a few more sets of rapids. Eventually we pulled off the river and changed into some dryer tops. I hesitated to risk the only dry clothes I had but Laura and I were headed for hypothermia. Some dry clothes and vigorous paddling warmed us up.

Our next stop was TA4, the take-out for the paddle leg of the race. On the way to TA4 we would need to pick up checkpoints 6 and 7, located along the riverbank. The river was every bit of 25 to 50 meters wide and we were going to cover 20 kilometers so we weren't going to see a flag hanging in a tree in the dark by chance. We would need to know where it was in order to locate it. Unfortunately, that didn't happen.

In a rare navigational snafu David never really got reoriented after the swim. The river had an endless series of wide bends in it and David had lost track of which one was which. While this seemed oddly out of character at the time in hindsight it is much clearer. David was showing signs of adult onset diabetes brought on by the endless buffet.

In David's defense, at night one bend in the river looks like every other bend. It can be very difficult to judge distance traveled. Time and speed are the best indicators. Depending on current 4 to 5 miles an hour is a good estimate. My watch was telling me we had long since paddled by the two checkpoints. That fear is confirmed when we come around a bend and see the fire on the beach that marks TA4.

### **Turkey Creek Boat Ramp**

**11:00 p.m.**

**14 hours 48 minutes**



**David, mandatory gear in hand!**

Following a quick snack of sandwiches, chips, cookies and some excellent home made brownies the Dark Horse saddled up our groaning steeds, attempt to buckle our straining pack straps and weave drunkenly up the paved road that leads out of TA/Buffer 4.

This a major climb and Laura, who has shown remarkable restraint at the buffet tables, drops us immediately. David and I struggle up the hill, wheezing from the effort. David is fully diabetic. I am still recovering from the emergency angioplasty the medics had performed at Buffet 4 in an attempt to remove a mayonnaise clot.

At the top of the climb we drop onto an old dirt road the runs south along the river, essentially back the way we came in the canoes. What David immediately notices is that we can actually pick up CP 7 by hiking 400 meters down a drainage gully to the river. The fact that he can tell which drainage we want in the pitch dark 4 kilometers from the canoe take out is impressive. This navigational feat is only slightly diminished by the fact that we paddled right by it.



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We argue about the efficacy of chasing this one CP down a muddy creek bed. I am concerned it may be impassable at some point and will take too much time to get. David says that none of that matters, he needs “redemption”. Redemption is hard to argue with. It doesn’t require logic nor is it be subject to a cost benefit analysis. It is its own reward. Laura and I are stumped. We start down the gully.

It is no picnic. We encounter the standard fare of brambles, mud and slippery rocks, but we find the point down by the river bank and climb back out in about 45 minutes. David is redeemed. I am covered in mud. In the future this act of redemption will be referred to as:

### **The Third Offense**

CP 8 was only a kilometer up the dirt road. We dropped the bikes to search for it. Within a few minutes there were three teams combing the woods alongside the road. It proves to be elusive. At some point I find myself 30 yards off the road exploring a depression that David seems to feel is promising when I am joined by the female from Team Grumpy Pants (names have been changed to protect... the grumpy). Female Grumpy Pants asks me how the river section went for us. I explain that it could have been better, we took a swim and missed both CP’s but we were able to grab one of them from the road.

“That’s cheating!” says the littlest Grumpy.

I am a little surprised for two reasons:

1. I don’t think it’s cheating.
2. She is absolutely giddy about it.

She is going to report us the first chance she gets. I don’t really care and frankly neither does David or Laura. Remember: we were after redemption. The CP was a bonus. If it’s against the rules they will just deduct that point. It’s adventure racing for goodness sake. It’s not like there’s prize money and swimsuit models at the finish line. It all gets sorted out at the end, along with a lot of beer. While I have seen some creative rule interpretation, cheating is rare. If you wanted to cheat at something to make it easier I am sure there are better opportunities out there than a 30-hour adventure race.

### **Natural Arch Picnic Area**

**3:01 a.m.**

**19 hours 11 minutes**

<http://www.usaranationals.com/resources/naturalarchtrek.pdf>

We make our way through CP’s 9 and 10 and arrive at Buffet 5. We drop the bikes and switch footwear again to do another orienteering leg. There are s’mores here. I eat 3 of them...and a roast beef sandwich...with chips and a coke. David stuffs his face as well. Laura probably doesn’t. I don’t know because I am focused on the smorgasbord.

We have never seen this much food in a race. Actually we have never seen any food in a race. The locals wanted to make the racers and their families feel welcome so they organized a vast quantity of food for every TA. These people were some of the nicest volunteers I’ve ever met. While their hearts were in the right place, it is roughly akin to running alongside a marathoner with an umbrella and a mister on a hot day.

We had been moving for over 18 hours and it was becoming increasingly difficult to stay focused. The few hours before dawn are the hardest, the urge to sleep is overwhelming. That becomes evident when we miss a cutoff on the trail to the first CP on this orienteering leg and run a ½ mile out of our way.

We pick up two of these points within an hour but the third proves elusive (marked “13” on the map above). It is somewhere on a steep side slope with few identifying features. We beat our way through thick brush and brambles



forest experiencing similar levels of frustration. Our plan was to get to the last orienteering leg at daybreak and try and clear it.

Back at the Buffet I grabbed another s'more (I love smore's!), put on my cycling shoes and added a layer for the chilly ride back to the start. When I checked in with Laura to see if she was ready she just nodded toward David. He wasn't going anywhere.

He was sitting in a chair next to the fire speaking to a woman who was standing next to him. She didn't seem to know he was even talking to her. His eyes were glazed over and he was just mumbling into the fire. Even with my limited medical training (I carry the med kit so I am practically a doctor) it was evident that David was in a diabetic coma.



I went back and ate another s'more. David remained essentially non-responsive for 20 more minutes. Laura and I did the best we could to keep warm and waited. I might have had one more s'more.

David eventually snapped out of his coma and we plotted a route back to the finish line/final orienteering leg. We passed through the rural village of Beulah Heights at 6:30 a.m. with some light just showing in the eastern sky. A large buck almost took David out on a steep downhill. It just came right out of a field and almost T-boned him.

It was very amusing. He had indeed seen it coming but thought it was a cow. Since when do cows dash around fields and leap fences? That woke him up.

It was spectacular when the sun came up. It had been a chilly night and I was looking forward to a little warmth. It's amazing how your body reacts to a new sunrise. It gives up hoping for sleep and reboots for a new day.

### **Dupont Lodge**

#### **Buffet 6**

**7:38 a.m.**

**23 hours 26 minutes**

<http://www.usaranationals.com/resources/cumberlandfallstrek.pdf>

The race HQ blogs throughout the event. Here's one I wish had not been posted:

**Luxuriating in warmth and breathing in the aroma of bacon.**

**Team Dark Horse is in the restaurant at TA6, Dupont Lodge, prior to setting out on their final trekking leg..**

The Dupont Lodge is the home base for this year's race. It is both the finish line and the start of the final orienteering leg. It is an old stone and timber lodge high on a ridge overlooking the Cumberland River. The final climb to the lodge was a grind. Not for Laura, of course, she went up at the standard rate of 16mph.

At this point the team was used to eating a full buffet meal every 4 hours and so when we realized the lodges all-you-can-eat buffet breakfast had just opened we decided to sit down for a few minutes and fuel up for the final 6 hour push. Hence the aforementioned blog post.

On the way down to the dining room we ran into Troy, the head of the USARA. He looked solemn.

"Come see me when you are done we need to talk about some penalties."

Troy is about the easiest going guy I know. He loves the sport and the athletes and clearly enjoys promoting the National Championships. He looked pained to be bringing up penalties.

“What penalties?” I asked.

**The First Offense:** It seems we were not supposed to ride our bikes to the lookout to get the passport at the beginning of the race. We were docked 2 minutes for that. We didn’t have a problem with that.

**The Second Offense:** Another team reported we did not carry our mandatory gear on the orienteering legs. This was related to us not having our packs. I had a problem with that.

I got pretty heated up about this. When did adventure racing get so prissy? I explained to Troy that a pack isn’t mandatory gear and we dropped our packs with the bikes and stuffed the gear in our bike shirts. I will be the first to admit that our idea of mandatory gear is creative but it’s all there. To his credit he accepted this immediately. I then reported all of the teams for not carrying their gear. As long as it’s okay to randomly accuse teams of cheating I thought I should get in on it.

It’s really not cool and here’s how to solve it. Get rid of the gear list. Except for the med kit everything else should be optional. If you are racing in the Adventure Race National Championships you should know what gear you need. If you want to race naked with your number painted on your backside and your med kit taped to your chest I am all for it. I would not bushwhack though...

We decided on a counter clockwise attack of the CP’s. We were on a ridge in a big bow of the Cumberland River. It was downhill to the river on the west, north and south sides. Our path would take us over the ridge to the north, along the flank and some of the high points to the east and then back over the ridge, working our way down to the river in the south. There were 3 more checkpoints on the other side of the river, we could either cross over on the bridge, work our way north through those checkpoints and swim back or simply skip those three and climb the ridge to the finish.



**View from the fire tower. Incredible day.**

We had 6 hours to go, it was getting warm out and our bellies were full. We took off at a trot and began bushwhacking down a ravine to the first CP.

What followed was essentially a tour of southern Kentucky cliff country. It was challenging terrain. Steep ups and downs with some thick vegetation. The third point was at the top of a fire tower and was manned by adventuring racing legends Robyn Benincasa and Patrick Harper. It’s always fun to spend a few minutes with these two and they were handing out candy and pain killers. Halloween for endurance junkies.

By this time we were getting used to the cliffs in the area and learning how to avoid picking a route that ended with standing at the top or bottom of a 40’ rock face trying to find a way up or down. David was feeling pretty good (which means I could barely keep up again) and it went fairly well until the 9<sup>th</sup> point, (marked “23” on the map above) the last one on this side of the river. It was marked as “base of waterfall” and we approached it by following the stream down the ravine to where it flowed over a wide overhanging rock shelf and dropped 30 feet straight



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There was one tantalizing possibility. On the eastern side of the shelf it was only a 12' drop to a lower shelf. We could have managed that but we could not see any way off that shelf. If we lowered someone off the shelf we were on and there was no way off the lower shelf we might have trouble getting them back up. Foolishly we erred on the side of safety and began a long climb back up the ravine and worked westward through the hills trying to find a route down.

We burned 2 hours on that one CP. I am not sure what we could have done differently. In hindsight we should have dropped someone over the shelf (this would have worked, a few teams did that). After 26 hours of racing you don't always make good decisions or quick ones for that matter.

That put us at 1:00 p.m. We still needed to get back up the ridge to the finish line so we opted to skip the 3 CP's across the river. The penalties for getting across the finish line after 2:00 p.m. were pretty severe; one CP for every minute you are late. We hustled back along the river and up to the finish at Dupont Lodge.



**Whether you come across this from the top or bottom it really slows things down.**

We crossed the finished line at 1:34 p.m., 29 hours and 22 minutes from the start. We took some pictures and then we were promptly led away in handcuffs.

Team Grumpy Pants had finished a few minutes earlier and gleefully filed a complaint with the U.N. high commission on checkpoint acquisition.

**The Third Offense:** We were not supposed to get CP7 on foot. We were under the impression that you could acquire CP's in any order. True... sort of.

The Dark Horse was blindfolded and taken to an undisclosed location where we were separated and subjected to "enhanced" interrogation techniques by the Race Director:

- "Had we indeed acquired checkpoint 7 by some other method then paddling a canoe?"
- "Did we knowingly enter a muddy ravine with the intent of slogging down it in the dark for 45 minutes and punching CP7 thus gaining an advantage over the other teams that had simply paddled up to it and punched it?"
- "Had we indeed run around the orienteering course with no backpacks on?"
- "Did we realize that not carrying big heavy backpacks full of unnecessary gear angered all the people who did carry big heavy backpacks?"

I did my best to answer these questions truthfully. I could hear David screaming in the other room. They had set up a buffet and from the sounds of it they were preventing Laura and David from eating at it. Listening to David beg



(Okay – officially none of that occurred )

It turns out that the rule was you could get the checkpoints in any order *of the leg you were on*. CP 7 was deducted from our finish score. The gear issue was dropped. Troy had faith in us and I don't know how this issue could have been resolved anyway. We all just had to be satisfied with a vague suspicion that we were cheaters and a tainted reputation. Oh, and a scarlet "C" was sewn on our packs.

Despite our legal troubles and the difficulties the Dark Horse has following the rules we enjoyed the race. The Kentucky hills are a great venue for adventure racing. I know it was a tremendous amount of work for Stephanie (the RD) to put the race on and I want to personally apologize for the Dark Horse being so high maintenance. I think it was the sugar...

We are already training for next year. With our attorney. And a dietician. The Catskills are practically our backyard. The Dark Horse will return.

Post Script:

A note on Jeff Papenfus:

Jim Kelleher was very apologetic after the race for springing the news of Jeff's passing on me at the start. No need Jim. Adventure racing is a hobby. Jeff was a friend. I thank you for telling me when you saw me.

Jeff was the kind of guy who always added something. Never subtracted. You were never sorry you ran across him. He was smart, funny and always upbeat. We talked often of racing together but the opportunity had not occurred. I wish it had. He died of a massive coronary at 42, while riding his mountain bike. He loved the outdoors and he loved to ride. His final moments included both.



**Jeff Papenfus 1969-2011. Journey on my friend.**

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# Wandering Around a Few of the Wonders of Kentucky and Tennessee

by Troy Farnan

We spent a couple of weeks wandering around Kentucky and Tennessee and were amazed at the number of natural and man made wonders in this area. The trip was a perfect family adventure, full of stunning sights and daily outings. We highly recommend the following local attractions.

## Cumberland Falls, Kentucky

### Cumberland Falls State Park Resort

Cumberland Falls State Park Resort is the place to stay in Cumberland Falls. The resort property is stunning. Dupont Lodge is built on a cliff overlooking the Cumberland River. The resort has lots of on-sight activities such as horse back riding and offers a variety of hotel rooms and cabins which feature full kitchens.

### Cumberland Falls

Cumberland Falls is located just minutes from the Cumberland Falls State Park Resort and is an amazing natural wonder. Try to time your trip during a full moon to catch a moonbow as this is the only place to experience a moonbow in the western hemisphere. There are several other marked hiking trails, many of which lead to other waterfalls in the area.





Photo: Suzanne Turell / Mount Rainier National Park

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### Yahoo Falls

Yahoo Falls is a one mile hike to see the tallest waterfall in Kentucky -- definitely worth the hike.

### Big South Fork Scenic Railway

Take a ride on the Big South Fork Scenic Railway to the Blue Heron Coal Mining Camp. The ride is both fun and beautiful, stopping off at the Blue Heron Coal Mining Camp. The Blue Heron site is designed as an oral history center where the people who actually lived and worked here tell their story through audio recordings housed in "ghost structures". The ghost structures are simply representations of where the actual buildings once stood many years ago.

### Natural Arch Scenic Area

A short, kid-friendly hike to the overlook of the amazing fifty-by-ninety foot Natural Arch. Continue the hike a short distance to visit the arch itself.

### McCreary County Museum

The McCreary County Museum is housed in the old Stearns Coal and Lumber Company Corporate headquarters -- built in 1907 -- a local history museum highlighting the early pioneer through the boom times of the industrial age. The Museum is filled with historic documents, objects, and photographs pertaining to McCreary County and the Stearns Coal & Lumber Company.

### Cave City, Kentucky

### Mammoth Cave Hotel

The Mammoth Cave Hotel is conveniently located inside the Mammoth Cave National Park, less than a one minute walk from the visitor's center. The hotel provides comfortable modern rooms and features three amazing restaurants. Be sure to try the biscuits and preserves! There is also an onsite convenience





store to restock your supplies.

#### Rock Cabin Camping

Step back in time at the Rock Cabins, a historic place to stay with lots of options which include a playground, cabins, RV hook-ups and primitive camping. The nine Rock Cabins were built in 1928 by one man for a total labor cost of \$72.00. Ralph & Lina are the sixth owners and provide a friendly Mom-and-Pop operation.

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Mammoth Cave Adventures is the home of Kentucky's first canopy zipline tour. They have a five-line primary course with two sky bridges for the thrill seekers and a shorter three-line course with one sky bridge for kids and the less adventurous. Be sure to take a ride

on the Super Swing for an additional heart pounding adventure. Round out your day with a scenic horse back trail riding adventure.

#### Dinosaur World

Dinosaur World features over 150 life sized dinosaurs nestled among a lush assortment of native vegetation. The dinosaurs are so believable that some visitors claim to see them moving through the shadows cast by the many native trees. The park also features a bone yard, play ground, gift shop, museum and a fossil dig which allows kids to find authentic fossils that they can take home.

#### Mammoth Cave Wildlife Museum

Since 1969 the Mammoth Cave Wildlife Museum has featured some of the greatest animals that can be found. The museum has nearly 14,000 square feet of exhibit area containing rare and exotic full-body mounts.

#### Kentucky Down Under



At Kentucky Down Under you'll discover a hands-on family fun adventure! The Terra Rosella and Land of the Lories feature hand feeding of Budgies, Rosellas & Loriekeets that will land all over you in the process. Be sure to walk through the bird garden to get a closer look at some of Australia's unique birds. The Outback stroll will put you close enough to pet three different species of kangaroo and three different species of wallabies. There are several other interpretive programs such as camp corroboree, the wool shed, mining and scales and tails. Kentucky Down Under also features the Kentucky Caverns; one of the most beautiful & accessible caves in the United States.

### Bowling Green

#### National Corvette Museum

Experience first hand the passion and the excitement of America's Sports Car, the Chevrolet Corvette. The museum is a living chronicle of the Corvette and the history behind the American legend. The museum boasts over 115,000 Square feet of prototypes, historic cars, and interactive displays. You can also tour the GM Bowling Green Corvette Assembly Plant, which is located across the street from the National Corvette Museum.

#### Lost River Cave

Lost River Cave features Kentucky's only underground boat tour. This exciting and interesting tour allows visitors a first hand glimpse of the cave's history such as Jesse James's hideout and as both a Confederate and Union soldier camp. The Lost River Cave also features a gift shop, hiking trails, a butterfly habitat and several children's activities such as mining.

### Knoxville, Tennessee

#### The Oliver Hotel

Located in the heart of Knoxville on Market Square, the Oliver Hotel takes you back to a more regal time and is a definite must on your next trip to Knoxville. Pamper yourself in one of the elegantly appointed rooms featuring handcrafted furniture, original artwork, and luxurious room amenities. The only bad thing about The Oliver Hotel is checking out!

#### Market Square

Enjoy outdoor dining, fountains and a great collec-

tion of eclectic shops at the Market Square. Market Square is a fantastic spot to spend the day browsing shops, eating and people-watching.

#### Tennessee Riverboat Company

Cruise the Tennessee River aboard the Tennessee Riverboat Company's Star of Knoxville. The one-and-a-half hour lunch cruise includes a lunch buffet and live music. The scenery was both beautiful and relaxing as we drifted back to an earlier time in history aboard the historic paddle boat.

The scenic drives to and from each area were as amazing as many of the attractions. I highly encourage anyone seeking an adventurous & scenic vacation to include Southeastern Kentucky and Tennessee in your plans; I believe you will be pleasantly surprised.



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then create new ones.**

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**4-Hour GPS Category**  
**12-Hour Extreme (USARA National Qualifier)**



**The adventure begins,  
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03.10.12**



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# *Scott Cassell's Thirty Mile Dive...*

## INTO OUR HEARTS

Do you know that feeling you get after a life-altering event — one so thrilling and challenging and exciting and powerful that all you can do is try to relive it? It's been over 48 hours since we docked the Sea Watch in Long Beach, California, and I've Googled every variation of "30-mile dive" and "Scott Cassell" I could think of. I've checked the production team Global Reef's website for more photos and videos and I've lingered on Facebook anticipating more friend requests from the remarkable people I met on board.

I was invited to join Captain Chris Wade, the owner of the R/V Sea Watch, and its crew on a world record diving attempt. Cassell, an expert

diver and ocean conservationist, was attempting to scuba dive from Catalina to Los Angeles. I'd seen Cassell on TV wrestling with Humboldt squid, but I couldn't imagine how anyone could survive diving for 30 miles without coming up to the surface. As I read more and more about the renegade diver, he seemed like a modern-day superhero. When I met him, he looked like one, too.

We arrived at the Sea Watch at 10 a.m. on Friday and I was 20,000 leagues under a sea of cluelessness. After talking with several others who were a part of Cassell's support team, I learned I wasn't alone.

"How in the world is this going to work?"



by Monica Nista

FLORIDA

# Sunshine Sea 2 Sea

72 Hour Adventure Race

Across Florida

February 16-19 2012

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[www.PangeaAdventureRacing.com/sunshine](http://www.PangeaAdventureRacing.com/sunshine)



"What time is he starting Saturday morning?"

"Are we going to get any sleep?"

The answer to most of our shared questions was, "No idea."

The Captain looked at me in the middle of assignments and asked, "Do you cook?"

"Um...."

"Cool," he said. "We'll have you in the galley, overseeing the action in there."

We checked in at least a dozen members of Global Reef. I was amazed when Aidan Wind, the co-founder and executive director of the conservation media group, told me they were from Vancouver and they'd driven down the coast towing a tender. With them was Cassell's family of support and several cameramen who'd been hired to take both underwater and crew footage. Ed George, who has done extensive work for National Geographic, was among them, as well as Jim Knowlton and Richard Theiss -- both Shark Week alumni.

While I checked the crew into their bunks, Bill Fike -- rigger and safety diver for the Sea Watch -- loaded a 1,500-pound diving bell onto the ship with a crane. It looked like a Portuguese man o' war, with a big glass dome and heavy chains linking it to a giant bucket filled with more chains. The bell was designed by machinist Paul Wilton and it would be used as a sort of air bubble during Cassell's crossing so he could eat and drink fluids during his epic journey.

We set anchor at Catalina around 7 p.m. and while many of the crew went to shore to listen to Cassell give a talk to some school children, I stayed behind to make dinner. For the next five hours we zipped around like bonefish helping the camera crew, cleaning, fixing and building last minute contraptions

Cassell would need.

I decided to try and get a couple hours of sleep at midnight, knowing Cassell and his family would be on board at 3 a.m. to suit up. I laid down and willed myself to rest, but that was all I could do. I was too filled with excitement and jitters to get any REM sleep. At around 3:50 a.m. I woke up realizing I'd overslept. Once I put on my layers I emerged from my confused state of sleep deprivation to find utter mayhem on deck. People rocked around dazed and confused looking for coffee and their accomplices.

"Have you seen Ed? Jim? Richard? Aidan? Ian? Ricky? Captain? Bill? Josh? Eric? Maleno? Darrell? Scott? Brett? Graeme? Dave? Andre? William? Kerry?"

"Nope, sorry, try the galley," I'd say.

Cameras of all shapes and sizes took up every corner of the boat, high beams lit up the deck in the early morning darkness, laptops sprawled out on each inch of countertop in the galley and we tripped over Pelican cases and tanks in varying piles of readiness.

I snuck in the galley for a moment to eat. My body didn't care what time it was, it just needed fuel. Thank God I had the wits to put out the breakfast food before I went to bed three hours before. The muffins were almost gone, only a few crumbs of banana bread remained, each tub of cream cheese had been busted open and the bagels were disappearing.

I would periodically go out to check on Cassell's prog-



ress. At 7 a.m., roughly three hours since we'd woken up, he was still seated at the stern with cameras focused on him like he was Brad Pitt about to step out of a limo onto the red carpet. At least four different people at the same time handled the gear he was trying to put on. Chainmail for the shark bites, the rebreather, the drysuit, the watches, the computers. It looked like we were sending him to the moon, not to 25 feet below the surface of the ocean.

When it looked like Cassell had everything on to sur-



vive a trip to Atlantis and back, we all let out a few hearty cheers and rounds of applause before he jumped in.

"LET'S GO SCOTT! WOO WOO WOO!"

We stared in wonder as Cassell's head started to get farther and farther away from the boat. This is really happening. He's off. Now the real work begins.

Before we proceeded to follow Cassell and the two other boats, we had to make sure the diving bell was safe for use. It had been tested for buoyancy back at the dock, but now divers would test it.

Fike and another safety diver Darrell Montague were in the water in full dive gear making adjustments. I stood on deck helpless watching the Captain and his full-time crew shout commands back and forth as they lifted and lowered the bell with the A-frame.

The bell was a pain. We tried all kinds of methods to keep it at a depth Cassell could use it at and it wasn't cooperating. We would add more buoys if Fike and Montague said it was too low, then once we put too much air into it, it would shoot to the surface. At one point the Captain yelled "JAWS!" The buoys attached to the bell started moving slowly and mysteriously by themselves, then faster and faster until you saw a huge glass bubble exploding to the surface.

With the hopes of everyone riding on their shoulders, Fike and Montague came back to the boat. In two hours, we'd done all we could do. We got it to a safe level and we had to move on or we'd be too late to meet up with Cassell. The Captain's boat only goes about eight knots and Cassell was cruising.

We pulled anchor and started after Cassell. We chugged along and stopped intermittently to switch gear with the Global Reef team on the tender. An hour or so later, we approached the two boats and we hoped Cassell was OK without a water/

food stop. His fiancé stood next to me and I could see it in her face right away.

"He couldn't wait for us. We took too long," she said, shaking her head, clutching his electric heating pack across her chest. He'd left it with us thinking we'd meet up with him before he'd need it. She intended to hand it off to someone who would put it on him underwater.

My heart sunk. I spotted him on board the Diver. This wasn't supposed to happen. I wanted to cry for him. For all of us. People from all over the world were here to watch this and we'd failed him.

"Are you sure that's him?"

"Yes, I'm sure."

"Is he going to keep going?"





# BUILT TO ROCK



ON THE ROAD TO EL DORADO SPRINGS, TIMMY O'NEILL  
JAMS OUT IN HIS NATIVE LODOS.

He doesn't know convention. He doesn't follow the rules. And he definitely doesn't take the beaten path. Timmy O'Neill is a modern-day pioneer...and he's got the scars to prove it. Scars earned setting speed records in Yosemite, exploring untouched terrain in Patagonia and getting kicked out of his makeshift cave-home in Joshua Tree. Before he's done, he'll have countless more scars – and if we had to guess, a slew of new stories to tell.

**Timmy O'Neill is Built to Rock. What are you built for?**

Follow Native on Facebook and share your story: [facebook.com/NativeEyewear](https://facebook.com/NativeEyewear)



"Is it our fault? I feel like it's our fault," I said.

"It's nobody's fault."

After about 45 minutes of drifting near the other two boats, and after a trade of equipment and personnel, we started to hear snippets of what had happened. It wasn't just the bell, but the sled that was pulling him broke and when he tried going from a rebreather to tanks he was nearly strangled by the rig. And Cassell would keep diving, no matter the attempt at the record was shot.

I met the CEO of Luminox, Andre Bernheim, who'd flown all the way from Zurich to witness this. Luminox wanted a hero to be the face of their product and they chose Cassell. They'd even made a watch named after him which Cassell wore during his trek. Bernheim was a friendly, personable man, and I considered him one of my buddies throughout the crossing.

"I just feel so sad for him. I'm so bummed," I said.

"Don't be sad," he said, in his Swiss-German accent.

"He's not doing this for the record. He's doing this for a much BEEG-er cause."

"You're right," I nodded, seeing the light in his eyes.

"So be happy. I'm happy. He's probably happy," he continued.

I kept these words close to my heart the rest of the day and tried to remain optimistic despite feeling like the mission was a failure.

Later that night, after roughly 12 hours of swimming

underwater and countless bouts of exhaustion, dehydration and equipment failures, Cassell landed at Cabrillo Beach in San Pedro.

He walked through the surf. He smiled at the cameras. He managed to hug family members and fans waiting to greet him on shore. After a shower and a clothing swap, he gave a speech at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium where I finally learned the true meaning of the day.

Saturday I witnessed a man with more heart than I'd seen in a decade. And only a handful of people on this Earth got to experience it. Maybe a few more than that know what even happened. The gear he was depending on to get him from Point A to Point B failed left and right. His body nearly failed him. Yet he kept going.

Cassell's purpose that day wasn't the record, though surely if he'd broken it the media would have eaten him up. Cassell was doing it for the oceans. For the sharks. For all of us.

I got the chance to speak to Cassell briefly before he gave his talk that night. How he stood there engaging the audience after what he'd been through was beyond impressive. I got teary-eyed talking to him. He looked at me with a Cheshire cat grin and said, "I'm happy as heck!"

There were many reasons for Cassell to have been brutally ticked off that day. For him to have stopped. For him to have given up. But that was never an option. Cassell, much like the sharks he so avidly speaks and fights for on a daily basis, had a simple, yet powerful focus that day.

One of the world's top predators is slowly slipping away from its ocean home. Now, where sharks loomed, the Humboldt squid, like wreckless out-of-control parasites, kill everything in their wake. Cassell swam through a channel that decades ago teemed with sharks, and this time in a 12-hour crossing, Cassell saw not one of the endangered creatures.

Cassell lit a fire in our hearts that day, with his determination and resilience. He reminded us that we make changes not by saying, but by doing, and it is for this message I am grateful to all who let me take part in his mission.



# 2012 USARA Regional Qualifiers

Sunshine Sea to Sea	February 16, 2012	Palm Coast, FL
MVP Health Care Frigid Infliction	March 03, 2012	Bolton Valley, VT
Eco-Lonestar Adventure Race	March 10, 2012	Grapevine, TX
Extreme Break Up Adventure Race	March 10, 2012	Milford, KS
Lightning Strikes Adventure Race	March 24, 2012	Mount Carroll, IL
Natchez Trace Adventure Race	March 24, 2012	Wildersville, TN
Backpacker Bushwhacker Adventure Race	March 25, 2012	Ville Platte, LA
Santee Endurance Adventure Race	April 07, 2012	Lake Moultrie, SC
Blue Ridge Mountain Adventure Race	April 14, 2012	Blue Ridge, GA
Grizzly Man Adventure Race	April 21, 2012	Greenough, MT
Rev3 Epic Adventure Race	April 21, 2012	Luray, VA
The Boonecrusher	April 28, 2012	Boone, IA
May Day at Wayway	May 05, 2012	Hewitt, NJ
Yough Xtreme Adventure Race	May 05, 2012	Ohiopyle, PA
Atomic Adventure Race	May 12, 2012	Blue Ridge, GA
MISSION Adventure Race	May 12, 2012	Nashville, IN
Chadron Adventure Race	May 19, 2012	Chadron, NE
The Heart Of It All Adventure Race	June 02, 2012	Springfield, OH
Longest Day and Night Adventure Race	June 2012	New Paltz, NY
The Crux and Crucible	June 09, 2012	Tahoe, CA
The Cradle of Liberty	June 12, 2012	Northeastern PA
Run, Row, Rock & Roll Adventure Race	June 16, 2012	Fairbury, NE
Untamed New England Adventure Race	June 19, 2012	The Forks, ME
Alaska AR Regional Championships	July 07, 2012	Alaska
Equinox Traverse Adventure Race	July 13, 2012	Hidden Valley, PA
Sheltowee Extreme 4	July 14, 2012	Morehead, KY
Greenridge Adventure Challenge	July 21, 2012	Flintstone, MD
Warrior Challenge Adventure Race	July 21, 2012	Panama, NE
Krista Griesacker Memorial Race	July 28, 2012	Pennsylvania
MVP Health Care Bitter Pill	July 28, 2012	Bolton, VT
Lake Tahoe 36	August 04, 2012	North Lake Tahoe, CA
Lionheart 24 Hour AR	August 11, 2012	Ohiopyle, PA
Expedition Idaho	August 12, 2012	Idaho
Dusk to Dawn Adventure Race	August 25, 2012	Luray, VA
The Thunder Rolls Adventure Race	August 25, 2012	Mt. Carroll, IL
The Shag	September 2012	New Jersey
East Coast AR Series Championship	September 14, 2012	Seven Springs, PA
Tahoe Big Blue	September 15, 2012	North Lake Tahoe, CA
Terra Firma Adventure Race	September 22, 2012	Burnet, TX
San Juan Island Quest	September 23, 2012	San Juan Islands, WA
Raid the Rock Urban Adventure Race	October 2012	Little Rock, AR
Wilderness Challenge	October 05, 2012	Yorktown, VA



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The winning team members at each regional qualifying event will be presented with a Merrell USARA Regional Champion Jacket.

AIX Group proudly awards each Regional Champion team a \$100 sponsorship to be used towards the team's entry fee into the 2012 USARA Adventure Race National Championship.



**Regional  
Sponsorship**

The first place coed team from each regional qualifying race will receive a \$400.00 sponsorship, provided by the regional qualifying race, to be applied to the team's entry fee for the 2012 USARA Adventure Race National Championship™.

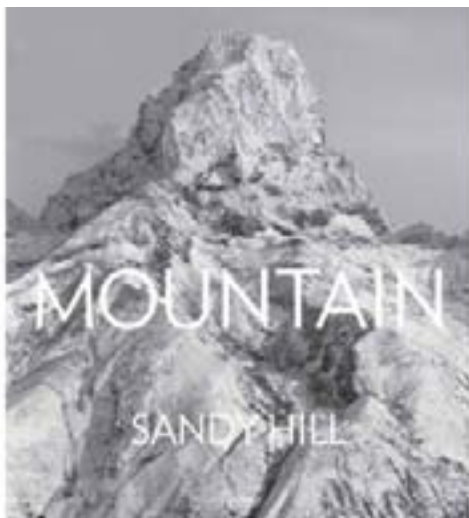


Sanuk Scurvy

Let's get one thing straight right off the bat: these are sandals. I didn't understand until I put them on. The Sanuk Scurvys are so light and airy it doesn't feel like you are wearing anything on your feet. I love them. They are some of the most comfortable footwear on the market. They have so many different styles as well as more traditional sandals so there is something (or a few somethings) for everyone. The pirate skulls on the inside are a nice touch, too! See all the sandals at [sanuk.com](http://sanuk.com).

Arborwear Tech Pant

The Arborwear Tech Pant is made of lightweight nylon that feels like soft cotton, but wicks away moisture and protects the skin from harmful UV rays. These pants are extremely soft, but tough as nails. I've scraped and scratched them against all kinds of things and they never show any signs of wear. The articulated knees and Rugged Gusset™ crotch offer ease of movement. I highly recommend these pants for work and adventure. Visit [arborwear.com](http://arborwear.com) to see their full line.



Mountain  
By Sandy Hill

This book is a collection of beautiful photos of mountains around the world. The stunning images show not only the mountains themselves, but the daring mountaineers and climbers who have dedicated their lives to summiting these beautiful and dangerous peaks.



### Luna Sandals

If you are a part of the barefoot running revolution or interested in joining up, have I got the sandals for you! Luna Sandals are a great way to protect your feet without taking away from the barefoot feel. All Luna sandals start with a Vibram sole, but options abound so you can choose the model and style that suits you best. You can even order a kit, cut them out, and lace them up yourself. I wear a size ten in most shoes and the Luna Sandals fit me perfectly. The elastic laces hold the sandals to your feet as tight as you want, but allow for some flex as your foot moves. They are extremely light and comfortable, easy to adjust and even work well in the water and rain without collecting mud or sliding around on your feet. Luna has developed a new plug system to ensure a completely flat bottom and a strong, thin ribbon between your toes for added comfort. If you want high quality, low maintenance minimalist footwear get a pair of Luna Sandals. View their full line of products and options at [lunasandals.com](http://lunasandals.com).



### Chaco Otis Boots

The new line of boots from Chaco live up to the reputation of their sandals. They feature a tough Vibram sole that performs great in a mix of conditions and the ChaPU™ midsole that creates the contoured LUVSEAT™ platform, providing the lasting arch support and alignment that put Chaco on the map. When winter hits and you have to hang up your Chaco sandals, they have you covered with the Otis and other boots. Visit [chacos.com](http://chacos.com) to see them all.



# Santee Endurance Adventure Race



Visit us at [www.santeeenduranceadventures.com](http://www.santeeenduranceadventures.com)

## Race Details

The Santee Endurance Adventure Race will be held in and around the waters, swamps, upland forest and beaches of Lake Moultrie and the surrounding areas.

Teams of two or three racers will canoe (8-10 miles), mountain bike (20-25 miles), and trek (8-10 miles) through a series of checkpoints and challenges.

Racers will be required to plot UTM coordinates on the provided map to navigate to each checkpoint.

## Registration

Early registration through Feb 5, 2012

2 person team – \$190

3 person team – \$275

Feb 6, 2012 until March 31, 2012

2 person team – \$245

3 person team – \$330

## Race Schedule

Friday, April 6, 2012,

5 p.m. to 7 p.m. – Team check-in, packet pick-up and gear check

Bottom Bar & Grill, 1033 Black Oak Rd., Bonneau, SC 29431

7:15 p.m. – Pre-race briefing

9:00 p.m. – Live Music

Saturday, April 7, 2012

7 a.m. – teams reconvene to receive course map and final instructions

8 a.m. – race start

4 p.m. – deadline for teams to finish

4 p.m. – 7 p.m. – post race dinner & awards (meal will be catered)

7 p.m. – until: Post race party. Stick around for live music at the bar.

## Contact Us

Matt Halter  
Race Director  
843-514-9415

[matthewhalter@gmail.com](mailto:matthewhalter@gmail.com)  
[comptonmccurry@gmail.com](mailto:comptonmccurry@gmail.com)

Comp McCurry  
Event Coordinator  
843-697-1100





# AWM *Product Reviews*

## Mad Water Waterproof Action Sports Pack Mad Water Waterproof Waist Pack

The Mad Water Waterproof Action Sport Pack provides 610 cubic inches of back pack fully waterproof up to 16 feet. This pack was made for protecting your camera, phone, ipad and clothes during your next adventure. As we take a closer look, this pack just gets better with a three liter hydration system, flexible sternum strap, built in safety whistle and tons of gear loops. The pack is comfortable with a low center of gravity and a padded breathable back. We were amazed at the functionality of the Mad Water pack, which is actually a waterproof back pack versus the dry bags with shoulder straps we have seen masquerading as back packs. If you need a little more room, just add the fully waterproof waist pack (275 cubic inches). Packed (no pun intended) with great features such as a padded back and solid bottom bottle holders that double as bases for attaching trekking poles or fly rods when connected to the back pack. This two piece combination gives the user options galore, protection galore and value galore. A true no-brainer for your next excursion with electronics.



## LEG LUBE \$8.95

LEG LUBE performance shave gel was created by athletes for athletes. We tested LEG LUBE and immediately noticed how smooth & slick it is which helps eliminate nicks and razor burn. LEG LUBE can be used anywhere you shave such as legs, face, arms and, get ready all you cave men, even backs! This stuff is packaged in a TSA carry-on approved container – actually chain lube bottles so it will not leak. After testing LEG LUBE I have two questions: why didn't someone think of this before and why don't you have LEG LUBE in your shaving kit.





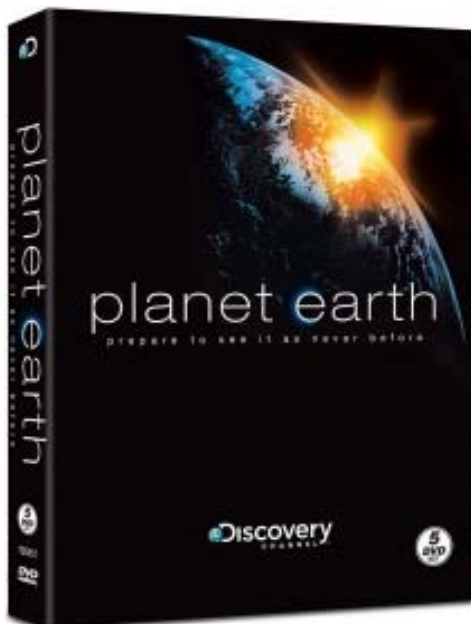
### P^cubed - Pick-Pocket Proof Pants - Adventure Traveler Pants

These tough adventure travel pants offer protection from pick-pockets through a combination of buttons, snaps, and zippers. You can close your pockets up tight and feel totally safe with the cut-resistant cargo pockets. The P^cubed pants are a great idea, adding security and toughness to comfortable pants. They also include a removable bottle holder that buttons on to your back pocket. See these and other gear at [clothingarts.com](http://clothingarts.com).



### Eco-Que Grill

This is a small, highly efficient, versatile grill perfect for any adventure or even just a picnic in the park. With the Eco-Que you can grill, bake, fry, roast, boil and smoke your foods. Using 75% less fuel than similar sized grills, you don't need much to get a good meal. The grill comes in two sizes, twelve inches and fifteen inches, and they pack up easily to about an inch thick. This is a great packable grill that doesn't require any fuel that you can't easily find on the ground. View their full line of home and portable grills at [ecoque.com](http://ecoque.com).



### Planet Earth

Planet Earth, from Discovery and the BBC, is now out on Blu-Ray with over seven hours of bonus footage. There really is no better nature documentary series as good as Planet Earth. Now on Blu-Ray, the picture is so clear you really don't have to bother going to all these places in person. With all the bonus features you can get a behind the scenes look at filming as well as a sneak peak at the next feature from Discovery and the BBC. Visit them online at [discovery.com](http://discovery.com).





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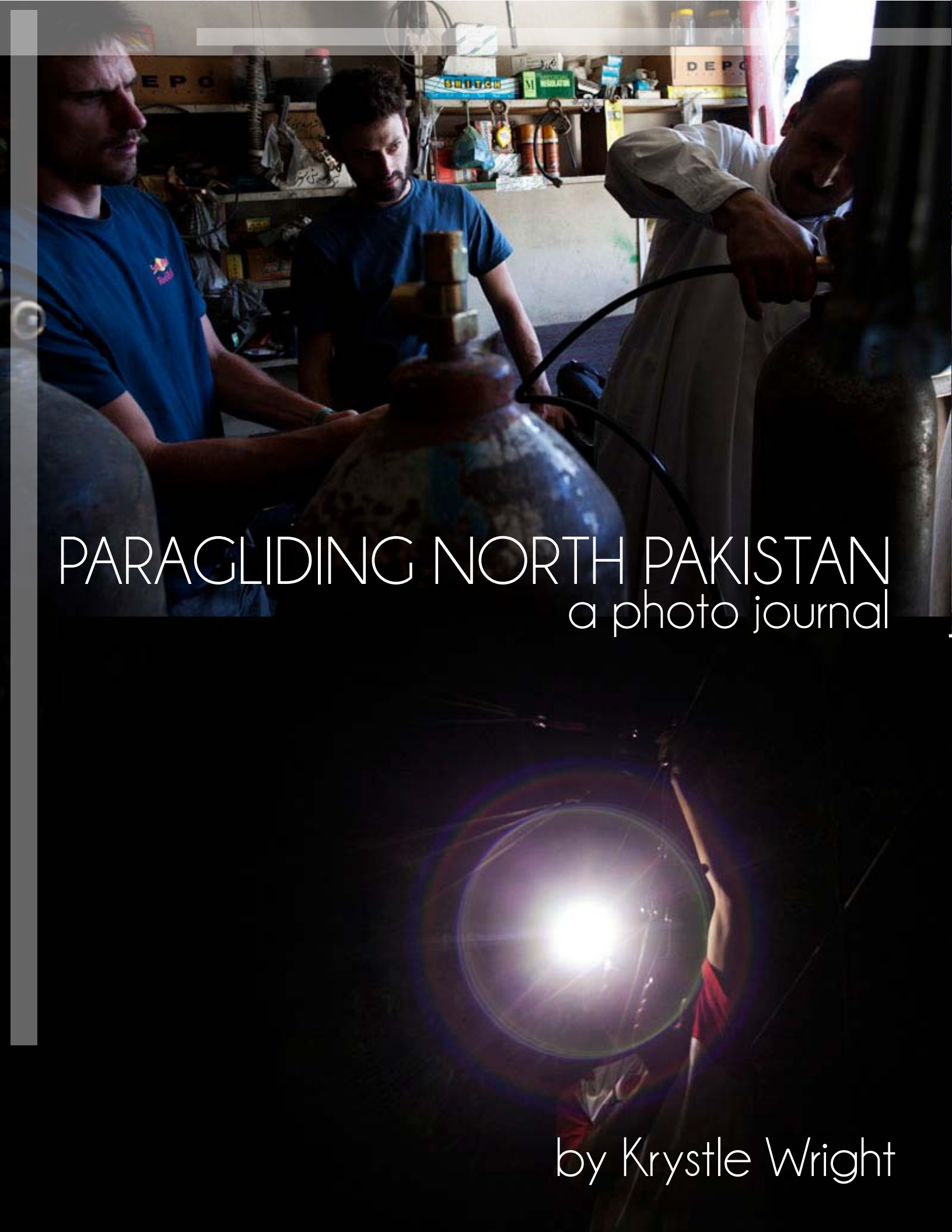
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# PARAGLIDING NORTH PAKISTAN

a photo journal

by Krystle Wright











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-Alistair Matthews,  
owner, GravityBolivia.com

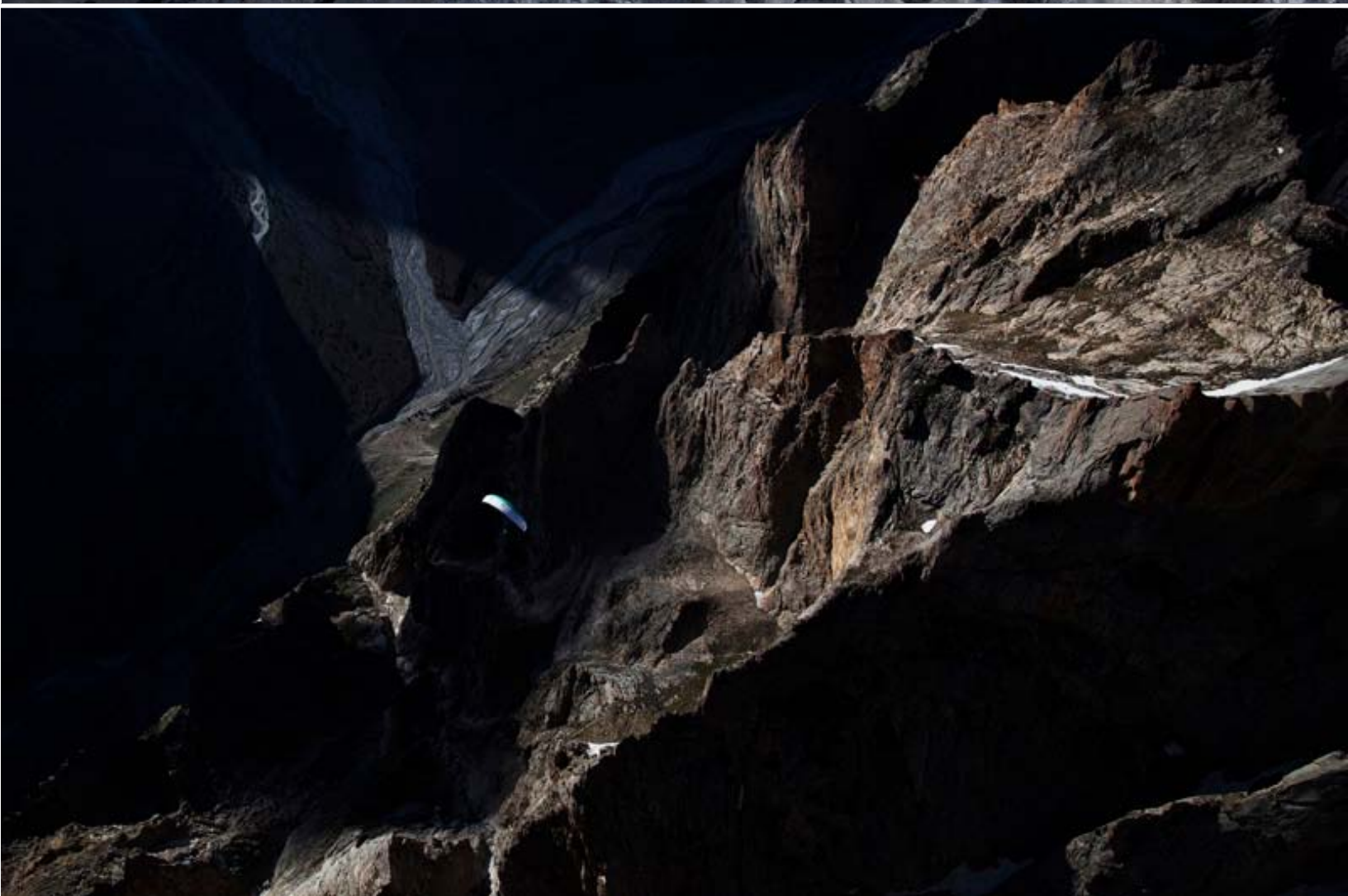


We keep Gravity's clients clean, comfortable, and happy as they ride down "The World's Most Dangerous Road." See what we can do for you at [www.customheadies.com](http://www.customheadies.com)



















# Odyssey Land Navigation & Advanced Navigation Clinics

Roanoke, VA

How do I get there?



2012

## Odyssey Land Navigation Clinic

- January 21
- March 10
- May 5
- June 2
- August 18
- November 10

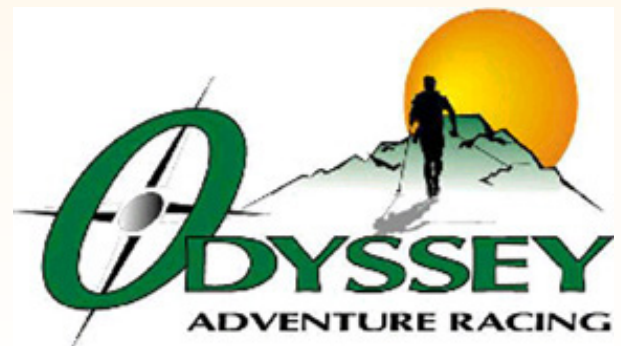
## Odyssey Advanced Navigation Clinics

- February 18
- December 8



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**[U.S. Adventure Racing Association]**

&

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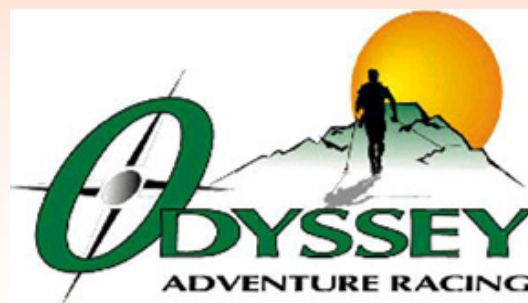
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**USARA Regional Qualifier**

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**[www.OARevents.com](http://www.OARevents.com)**

















# Road Rash Relief

**Wounds are part of adventure racing, and for some a badge of honor.**

However, any break in the skin can become an entry point for MRSA (antibiotic resistant staph) or staph bacteria causing a potentially dangerous infection.

Used on minor cuts, scrapes and abrasions, StaphAseptic can help prevent skin infections caused by bacteria such as MRSA, staph, and other germs. It also includes Lidocaine for quick and effective pain relief.



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- May 12-13, 2012
- Blue Ridge, Georgia
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**pangea**  
Adventure Racing

























# Odyssey One Day Xtreme Adventure Race

Roanoke, VA

Saturday, March 24, 2012

- *Trekking*
- *Paddling*
- *Orienteering*
- *Mt. Biking*
- *Sweet Single Track*
- *Beautiful Views*
- *Challenging Terrain*
- *Boats Provided*
- *USARA Regional Qualifier*
- *18 Hours of Unadulterated Fun*

So what is stopping YOU from having the time of your life!

View from checkpoint ???  
Come find out!

Experience Adventure!  
[www.OARevents.com](http://www.OARevents.com)

